The Commonweal

September 14, 1951

Postscript on the Cicero Riot

"Where do we go from here?"

DANIEL M. CANTWELL

The Social Pattern in Sicily

Patchwork of Rags and Silks

SEAN O'FAOLAIN

The Case for Ikon Art

WALTER KERR

Volume LIV **15c** *Number 23*

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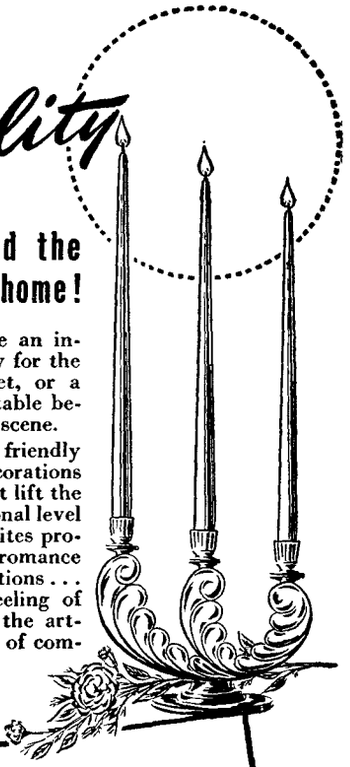

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• THIS WEEK •

Week by Week 539

Postscript on the Cicero Riot
by Daniel M. Cantwell 543

A Patchwork of Rags and Silks
by Sean O'Faolain 546

Alone Together in a Closed Shop
by John C. Cort 548

The Screen
by Phliip T. Hartung 550

The Case for Ikon Art
by Walter Kerr 551

Communications 554

Books 555

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Published weekly, printed and copyrighted, 1951, in the U. S. A., by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685. Entered as second-class matter, February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. U. S. and Canada, $7 a year; Foreign $8. Single copies, 15c.

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Defense in the Pacific

AS JAPAN found out after 1941, there is something about the vast reaches of the Pacific akin to the Russian steppes. Defense forces can be pushed farther and farther back but great stretches of terrain still remain to be conquered. There are still sizable areas far behind the lines where defense forces can regroup and from which they can issue forth.

Any current defense plan for the Pacific, however, would have to concern itself chiefly with preventing the gradual absorption of the key lands fringing the Soviet Empire. The Communists are masters at making their conquests appear as internal revolutions; their men are already on the ground. Today it is possible to envisage such a threat materializing in the Philippines, Indo-China, Burma and Thailand, or Indonesia. And the conquest of one such independent nation tends to bring in its wake the fall of others.

For the moment, at least, the acts of aggression contemplated in the old-line mutual defense treaties appear less likely in the Far East. The Soviet Union could commit its air force to attack in the Pacific, if willing to risk a general war, but the Russians are not believed to have a navy equal to offensive operations on a major scale. Infiltration where popular discontent runs high is their expected course.

The defense pacts the United States has just concluded with the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand sound, then, more as guarantees against attempted expansion by Japan than the apparently insatiable USSR. This is particularly true in the case of the two British Dominions, which are so remote from the area of potential combat as to be considered rear area bases along with continental United States. But these treaties should be welcomed primarily as the beginnings of a Pacific-wide defense structure.

The security agreement which the United States plans to conclude with Japan after the signing of the peace treaty at San Francisco is of key importance in itself. Without a strong Japan there can be little in the way of a power balance in the Far East to offset the Mao-Stalin Axis. At the moment the idea is to have the American Navy and Air Force out there supported by Japanese ground troops. But the architects of the coming defense pact do not wish expressly to bar a Japanese navy or a Japanese air force.

Restoration of Japanese independence will bring on new difficulties not the least of which is economic, considering the lost Japanese markets, population pressure on poor natural resources and the industries destroyed during the war. A matter of some delicacy is the stationing of American troops—supposed to be withdrawn by the terms of the peace treaty and immediately sent back to the four Japanese Islands in accordance with the subsequent freely negotiated security pact.

THE problem of containment in the Pacific is one of the most difficult on which this country has ever engaged. As Caucasians and allies of Britain we are a priori on the wrong side of the colonial question. There are two strikes on us at the start. The India of Mr. Nehru continues neutralist with some bias in the Soviet direction. Indonesia, beset by poverty and other internal problems, seems anything but stable; nor does the new government of the former Dutch East Indies appear to be especially well-disposed toward the United States.

The Filipinos find themselves (now outside the American free trade orbit) in dire financial straits; they also have the greatest difficulty in maintaining order in the face of the repeated raids of the Huk guerillas. Moreover, the economic future of Japan is highly problematical. All along the periphery of the Eurasian heartland the going is tough.

But the United States clearly recognizes that defense is a global task. If protection of the Ruhr, the heavy industry of France and Benelux

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and the English midlands perforce come first in our calculations, we have no intention of leaving the Far East undefended. If nothing else the new and forthcoming mutual defense pacts serve as a blunt warning that aggression anywhere leads straight to war.

Two Rolls Royces in Every Garage

IN HIGH hopes of regaining power from the Labor Party, the British Conservatives are coming out with a statement of policy that is flatfootedly in favor of making money. The way to British strength, they say, lies in increased production, and increased production comes from efficiency and hard work, and people, they say, devise efficient methods and work hard if they know they can turn a buck doing so. This is "an American brand of capitalism," say the Conservatives, "we believe there are not too many capitalists but too few."

In short, Winston Churchill and his party would like to ride back to power on the profit motive. Now the profit motive has some of the characteristics of the spiritous beverage that its initials bring to mind. In moderation, it has its place. And to deny its power would be naïve indeed. Many socialists and other socially-conscious people would like to think that most men prefer fraternal cooperation with modest returns to making a real pile and buying a yacht.

They would, we think, be disillusioned if they were to take the matter up with members of the three-block long breadline we saw on 31st Street in New York the day before Labor Day. But then breadlines seem to have a certain filial relationship to capitalism, so we come around the circle. Breadline occupants come from what is known in some capitalist circles as sub-marginal production. They are people who are not efficient enough, for any number of private, inviolable, reasons. But what happens, then, to these inefficient competitors? And what about the deification of greed that lurks in the shadow of the profit motive? And what about enterprises that sacrifice the joys of money-making to higher motives? Is "capitalism for the people" the answer? Well, maybe so. Once it was "capitalism for some of us," so that much has improved.

The genius of capitalism lies in the fact that it is *individual* enterprise, and we suspect that the individuality is more important than the profit in the long, the very long, run. The Conservatives have a good thing there. Socialism, somehow, can reach the individual only through a number of forms, all done in triplicate, and that isn't very soul-satisfying. However Mr. Michael Fogarty has repeatedly argued in this magazine that there is a Labor Party ferment in Britain which might well do away with some carbon copies.

There remains the smugness about a remark a Conservative MP made about typical British Conservatives: ". . . They stand out, they are easily recognized: the active producers of wealth."

But there are a lot of things in the world besides wealth that are worth producing. That, Mr. Churchill, is our problem.

French Schools Debate

WHEN the matter of government aid to religious schools crops up in other countries, it is difficult to think of their problem in other than American terms. Even when the distinctions and contrasts between the French and American situations are drawn, one situation cannot help at certain points strongly suggesting the other.

Historically the French school problem was brought into sharp focus in 1905 with the enactment of the laws that expelled the religious orders and secularized that nation's schools. In the United States the divorce of religion from education has been much more gradual. Many years stretched between acceptance of the founding fathers' principle that there should be no established religion in this country (as there is in England) and the present-day claim of some American educators and secularists that our traditional separation of church and state implies an impenetrable wall between them.

• NEXT WEEK •

ROBERT BARRAT writes of the church at Assy and of new religious art in France.

"Religious art in the West has been constantly on the decline since the Romanesque period; it is enough just to compare some Romanesque chapel in the Auvergne with the gigantic baroque basilicas of Fourvières at Lyon or Sacré-Coeur at Paris. But in this domain, as in many others, brave men have for a number of years been taking the initiative and we are now witnessing in France an extraordinary effort to reconcile religious art with living contemporary art."

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The second big difference between the two situations is the urgency of a remedy in France. Some thirty percent of the school children there attend private, primarily Catholic, schools. There are no other school facilities able to shelter them. The universal free education decreed in France after the war is available only in theory, for thousands of school buildings were destroyed in the war and few have been replaced. Yet the number of French school children has greatly increased. Meanwhile many of the Catholic schools are in dire financial straits. They are unable to pay decent teachers' salaries and without subsidies a number of them may not be able to reopen this fall. No such degree of urgency is operative in our discussions of federal aid.

Finally there is the influence which the school question exerts throughout French politics. It has divided the country in two ever since the Radicals, the Socialists and other traditional anticlericals put over the secularization laws at the turn of the century. It serves as a major point of division today between the Gaullists, Peasants, Independents and MRP on the one hand, the Communists and Socialists on the other. It explains why many of the attempts to form a cabinet before M. Pleven finally succeeded were doomed to fail. For our Democrats and Republicans to have a direct tie-in with the school question comparable to this would be hard to imagine.

After weeks of discussion the Assembly has now adopted a compromise bill providing subventions for individual scholarships. In politics the French are nothing if not doctrinaire, sticklers for political tradition. French Socialists are about as adamant in opposing state aid to Catholic schools as French Communists, whose following is immense. Therefore, the margin in the Assembly for indirect subsidies proved to be a surprise for many political observers. For the determination that is aroused whenever there are government debates on the school question is witness to the intensity of the French people's personal convictions and rude political beliefs.

Coast to Coast TV

MANUFACTURERS of television sets, advertisers and station operators could scarcely have had a happier turn of circumstance than President Truman's opening of our coast-to-coast TV facilities from the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference in San Francisco. Here was a historic occasion all ready-made.

By the end of this month nearly one third of all American homes will have television sets. That will mean a potential audience of some forty millions. This number can also be counted on to grow steadly with the years. It looks like a bonanza medium that marketers of cigarettes, soaps and cosmetics and national brands of food and drink will have no choice but to support.

When millions of people are simultaneously viewing the same boxing or wrestling bout, tennis match, baseball or football game or any other sort of college or professional sporting event, how much of a determining effect will that have on the actual participants? Or will the result be registered indirectly—in such matters as the relationship between charges for television rights and the actual gate receipts or the effects on actual attendance at other sporting events (such as high school or minor league games) transpiring at about the same time?

In the field of straight entertainment there is to begin with the large possibility that the extension of television facilities from the Atlantic to the Pacific will give Hollywood a new ascendancy in the field. The congregating of movie stars and script writers there—and the growing tie-in between video and conventional movies—makes this virtually inevitable.

The Hollywood influence should be, then, increasingly discernible in our television programs. And since it is a question of a mass medium with a vengeance, entertainment notable for originality, appositeness and wit seems farther off than ever from our television screens. Vaudeville plus Hollywood is still vaudeville.

Since advertising pays the piper, it is easy to discern the direction of the motivating force. It is an axiom of American advertising to give the public what it wants. Hollywood has long been credited with pitching its productions at the mind of the ten-year-old. If it is mistaken in such an estimate, research operatives of American advertisers will soon uncover the margin of error.

Therein lies the challenge in the situation. If what the American masses want is inexorably to determine the content of our television programs, how can we raise the public taste? No doubt that is primarily the job of the home and the school and to some degree, perhaps, of the local church. But the telecasters could themselves throw a few fagots on the fire by coming up from time to time with an hour that has the attributes. As they improve their visual techniques, they could contribute more than they now do toward creating a demand for better, not necessarily costlier, programs.

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We Like Ike

EVERY nation, every human society has a certain image of itself—an idealized portrait—and generally it is this ideal rather than the imperfect actuality that comes to mind when the society thinks of itself.

The abstract human figure in cartoon starkness—the Radical, the Jesuit, the Jew, the Capitalist, the Worker, the Poet—has been responsible for a great deal of mischief in the world, needless to say. But what is to be said of the flattering portraits of themselves that all groups cherish?

Well, there is this in their favor, they are the projection of an ideal, and in that at least they bespeak the virtues the group accepts and exalts. In other countries mention of the United States may invoke a gangster figure, a bungling hayseed, a backslapping Babbitt or a nouveau riche innocent. But that certainly is not the way we think of ourselves, however much these characteristics might really belong in any strictly realistic composite image.

When we look into the mirror we get another reflection —the reflection of our national ideals, the values that have assumed primacy among us. We don't always see what we are but what we would like to be. So in a sense the flattering mirror does tell us something about ourselves.

Every now and then an actual person turns up who incarnates these ideals. We like then to think of him as "typical,"—the young Lindbergh, for instance— but of course he is not typical in the sense that the country is full of his like but only in so far as he represents the Type, the idealized figure. Francis of Assisi may be called a typical Franciscan in this sense, though he towers above his followers, as the Saint, the Hero, the Genius always does.

The same is true of most "typical Americans." The fresh, wind-swept Hollywood ingenue is fresher, prettier, more winning than the average girl, or she would not be "typical." Miss America would stand out at any high-school commencement. Young Charles A. Lindbergh was the rage, not because he was the average young American but precisely because he was not. He approximated too closely the ideal that always tends to reach far above the average.

It is, I think, General Dwight Eisenhower's outstanding gift that above all others he now personifies the ideal American in the popular mind. He is what we see when we look in the magic mirror—a genial fellow, mature and yet indestructably boyish; a supremely confident leader with no note of arrogance; a tough-minded man of action in no way domineering; a knowing chap who has been around, yet not a sophisticate; a great man who wears his greatness lightly. When we look at Ike, we like to think we see ourselves as a people and a powerful nation.

The accidents of history lifted this Kansas soldier from obscurity, threw him into the limelight and put on his shoulders awesomely grave responsibilities. It was almost inevitable that he should be offered the presidency, the position of chief representative, he who popularly personifies all we hope to be. And of course it is marvelously significant that our Typical American, who had greatness thrust upon him, should modestly hesitate to assume leadership. But as long as the Eisenhower image in the American mind remains what it is, he will be offered the highest honor. In honoring him, we are, in a sense, honoring ourselves; at least we are honoring our ideals and aspirations.

We would like the world to see us as we see ourselves; that has always been of more immediate concern than seeing ourselves as others see us. With Eisenhower, leading representative of a nation of frank, open "nice guys," that seems more likely than with other leaders who may be far more capable, more experienced and more suited to the presidency but who do not have the magic compound of ideal traits.

As long as the popular image of Eisenhower remains, politically he is dynamite. But in the heat of an election there would surely be an all-out attempt on the part of the opposition to change the image. Right now, no one dares. Even his rival candidate Mr. Taft has nothing but praise for the General. But such gentle treatment wouldn't last long after the chips were down.

Further, to the extent that Dwight Eisenhower would be identified with one group of citizens as opposed to another, he would cease to be the universal type-figure. the typical American in the ideal sense should be neither Republican nor Democrat. He should not be identified too closely with any one group, else how can he personalize the aspirations of all? A certain amount of vagueness is essential to the role.

Both parties have been eager to be identified with Ike, apparently in the hope that some of the magic appeal would rub off on them. But as soon as the General openly accepts one loyalty or the other, some of that appeal will be gone; maybe, bit by bit, all of it.

The day Candidate Eisenhower makes his first political speech, Eisenhower "the typical American" will begin to disappear. The day Charles A. Lindbergh first publicly voiced his opinions on the isolationist-interventionist argument before World War II, he began to lose his standing as a national type. Lindbergh was an isolationist, but I think the same thing would have happened, though maybe not to the same degree, if he were an ardent interventionist. During the war Winston Churchill transcended political partisanship in the popular mind, to serve as the British type-figure. But soon after the victory and the resuming of politics as usual, he was cut down from the towering wartime symbolism to his native magnificence as leader of the Conservatives.

In the same way, Dwight Eisenhower as President may prove to be what the doctor ordered. I don't know, nor does anyone else. The only point to be made now is that as a Republican (or a Democrat) General Ike will cease to be the typical American, thus becoming incapable of the role that some of his ardent supporters expect him to play.

JOHN COGLEY.

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Postscript on the Cicero Riot

A turning point in race relations might have been reached in Chicago with the frank display of bigotry.

By DANIEL M. CANTWELL

HAD Harvey Clark and his family succeeded in moving into the Cicero, Illinois apartment he had rented in July, he would have been the first Negro resident of the town. By now the story of the riot and the violence in Cicero has gone round the world.

The damage to the building has been variously estimated from $20,000 to $50,000. The building stands uninhabitable. The Clarks are still without a place to live. The 19 families who formerly lived in the building are gone. For them too the riot was a tragedy. They were willing to live in the same building with the Clarks. Organized violence decreed otherwise.

In retrospect there are mysteries about the incident. There was, for instance, the criminal negligence of the police. Neither the Cicero chief of police, nor the Sheriff of Cook County, nor the local officials of Cicero showed any disposition to use the techniques which have been developed for controlling riots. Riots are no longer excusable.

Moreover, on the Wednesday night the destruction took place a lawyer who identified himself as living a block and a half from the building was allowed by the police to address the mob. He told the people there were no legal and peaceful means for keeping "niggers" out, that they had to take the law into their own hands, that they must give this family and any other Negro family thinking of moving in a lesson not to be forgotten. The police standing by were conveniently deaf, as they were blind when the destruction began.

Possibly, too, there was criminal conspiracy. Many of the families living in the building had moved out during the day. Who had forewarned them? Apparently the riot was organized and planned. And did the police know of the plan? There are rumors that someone has so testified before the grand jury hearings now in progress. At any rate the open hostility of the police to the Clarks prior to the move-in is a matter of record. No semblance of equal protection under the law was given the Clarks.

REV. DANIEL M. CANTWELL, of the Chicago archdiocese, is chaplain of the Catholic Labor Alliance.

Finally there was the moral vacuum which became apparent in the days following the riot. The vacuum grew, I think, not merely because only a comparatively few religious leaders spoke up, but because when they spoke what they said was, for the most part, incomplete, cautious, negative. They said nothing about discrimination, nothing about the denial of brotherly love. On the part of Catholics there was none of the spirit of the policy laid down by Cardinal Stritch to govern the Catholic institutions of the diocese, a policy which allows no discrimination in the life of the Church and which Catholics should feel it is their duty to carry over into civic and community life.

There were some exceptions. The clearest and most far-reaching moral pronouncement came from a group of laymen, residents of Cicero-Berwyn and the adjacent suburbs. They did more than protest the violence. They came to grips with the central moral issue—compulsory racial segregation.

In an open letter they asked their neighbors whether people who love God could consistently go along with a social policy which condemned their fellow-men to indignities and injustices. The letter was picked up by the Catholic and secular press and was, I would judge, read by close to six million people.

"Attempts are made," they wrote, "to justify segregation by saying that it produces peace and harmony by keeping separate, people who would otherwise be in conflict. This ignores the fact that separation itself is a principal cause of conflict . . . since it fosters those traits in both the majority and minority groups that lead to conflict. . . ."

From close to the scene came some other moral protests. In at least one of the neighboring churches the priests spoke forthrightly on the riot. I know the same was done in at least three churches in Chicago.

★

WHERE do we go from here? The Cook County grand jury has been holding hearings, and by the time this appears may have made a report. The rioters arrested at the scene are still waiting to be brought to trial. The $200,000 damage suit filed by Clark's attorneys against the Cicero police and civic officials will not come into court until the middle of September.

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The outcome of these cases in court can seriously affect the Cicero situation. Anything short of a vigorous court decision against the police and the civil officials in Cicero for their failures to uphold the law and give equal protection would be a miscarriage of justice, would open the way to repeated incidents of violence in the future, and would generate such cynicism among Negroes that some kind of retaliatory action on the part of Negroes could be expected when the next incident of racial hate and violence occurs in the Chicago area.

On the other hand stern decisions against the teen-age rioters might do almost as much harm as good. Bitterness that would smolder for years would not improve the chances of integrating all minority groups in Cicero. Opposition might even be stronger. Would some dramatic gesture of reconciliation on the part of the lawyers prosecuting the case be advisable? The least that can be said is that it has never been tried.

What is going to happen to the Clarks is at this moment uncertain. Harvey Clark has declared that he intends to move back into the building from which he was barred. The realization of that wish may be long delayed if the building is tied up in court action and if the money needed to repair the building is not forthcoming.

Meanwhile I can only wish that some community in the Chicago area—preferably a religious one, say a Catholic parish—which has to date been all or predominantly white would invite the Clarks to come and live among them. That too would be a grand gesture of reconciliation.

What I am suggesting is not that the effort be abandoned to help the Clarks or any other Negro family to live where they choose. I am suggesting the need for time—time for getting the building in repair, time for attempting some kind of creative peace-making in Cicero. Meantime, the Clarks need a place to live.

★

CICERO could mark a turning point in race relations in Chicago. That hardly seemed possible the week of the riot. Something close to despair over Cicero weighed on lots of stalwart people. Many people said that it was a thoroughly corrupt community, that the residents had no moral or civic pride, or they would long since have done something about the gambling, the syndicates, the political machine.

As a matter of fact, the community is rare where the small home owners have a greater pride in their neighborhood than prevails in Cicero. The town is an enviable picture of order and peace. Czech housewives are second to none in the care of their homes. Fathers and mothers there are as close to the syndicates as the rank and file of Chicago used to be to Al Capone.

Cicero is by no means thoroughly bad. Indeed, what has gone wrong in Cicero is something good. The home-making human virtues of these people have been oversown by cockle, by national exclusiveness, by middle-class materialism, by the drying up of human compassion and sympathy for other families in need. They have acquired homes, but then made them the golden calf to be worshipped and possessed at all costs. They have arrived at middle-class suburban Utopia. The story of Dives repeats itself. The Scripture does not say that Dives was a very rich man. He was a man who had his spirit in his riches; he didn't like his spirit disturbed by anything as low-class as a beggar. He doesn't today like to be disturbed by anything as obviously "low-class" as brown skin. It runs down Utopia.

There are many signs that the Cicero incident has stirred an unprecedented revulsion against racial conflict and racial segregation. Individuals have acted. Groups are preparing to act.

There is the beginning of group action too. The group of Catholics who issued the "Dear Neighbor" letter have organized themselves into a west suburban unit of the Catholic Interracial Council. And an effort is under way to create a broad coordinating citizens' council in the western suburbs—working against discrimination and cooperating with the Illinois Interracial Commission.

★

WHAT must be developed now is a long-range educational effort. Its form is becoming clear. First of all it must be broad-scale.

Cicero has given the final answer, I hope, to the contention that there is no use talking about the racial problem in church or school because we have no problem when there are no Negroes there. There were no Negroes in Cicero, either. There was hatred and prejudice which had never been challenged. By July, 1951 it was too late. Silence is no cure. Cicero may be repeated elsewhere. Negroes will not remain in the ghetto.

The indoctrination should begin with something positively Christian. It is not enough to decry events like the Cicero riot merely because the Communists use them as propaganda against us in Europe and Asia. The question is not what do the Communists think of Cicero, but what does Christ think about Cicero?

Christ pictures the good neighbor as the man who bridged over in action the gap which separated Jews from Samaritans in His own day. The good neighbor took the man in trouble not to an inn for the Jews, but to his own inn. Then he

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footed the bill. He lost money; his good neighborliness cost him something. This good neighbor resisted the social pressure against fraternization, put himself to inconvenience, and paid a price financially.

Christ cited this as a case of love in action. There is no other proof of our Christianity comparable to it. "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, that you have love one for another."

But good will is not enough. Intelligence must be enlisted in the fight against the ghetto. The ghetto will not go till more white people are helped to understand how bad life is there for parents. And until some effort is made to unravel clichés about property values and what happens to them when a Negro moves into a neighborhood. The first problem would require a long article.

About property values, the most obvious thing is that few people really know anything about them, and few people really mean what they say about them.

Few realize that Negroes do own and take care of property when given the chance. They do have beautiful apartment buildings when not exploited. There is evidence available for any honest person in Chicago and other large cities of the country.

Few people know that the conservative National Association of Real Estate Boards and honest real estate men here in Chicago have admitted that a Negro tenant will take care of property as well as any tenant on the same economic level. There will be some exceptions, of course. But there will also be some Negroes who will do a better job than whites.

The Association also maintains that a Negro home buyer carries through to completion the purchase of his home as reliably as a white buyer of the same wage status. In some cases, even better.

White persons will say that property values have always gone down when Negroes move into a neighborhood. They don't really mean that. Actually the most valuable rental properties in Chicago, the properties providing the most lucrative return, are the apartment houses in the crowded ghetto on the South Side.

What they really mean is that for raising families in decency the grossly over-used and crowded property on the South Side is a menace. What they sometimes don't realize is that Negro parents know that as well as white parents. But the Negroes are caught up in and identified with the diseased, demoralizing ghetto.

Again, a white person will say that if a Negro moves into his block the value of his property goes down. What he really means is that he dislikes living near Negroes so much that he would not stay in the neighborhood. And he dislikes Negroes so much that he would rather sell to anyone else at less money than the building is allegedly worth, or at less money than he paid for it.

There is no good reason why one should leave when a Negro moves into his neighborhood. But racism has so penetrated our society and established our social customs that few men can muster up courage enough to resist the social pressure. Thank God the number of those who do resist is increasing.

There is no reason why a person who for any reason wants to move should feel compunction about selling a home to a Negro. Nonetheless we are told that such a sale is unfair to one's neighbors. It is thought to be unfair because any Negro is thought to be essentially unclean, and because close proximity to Negroes is thought to be the first step to an interracial marriage in the family. Again and again in almost any discussion the question returns: Would you want your daughter to marry a Negro?

★

INTERRACIAL marriage, too, must be discussed if we are going to educate ourselves away from maintaining the ghetto. By and large we have been enforcing a hush-hush policy about it. Such a policy is not removing an irrational fear.

Actually, Negroes by and large are not interested in interracial marriages. Moreover, segregation has not prevented interracial "marriage," of a type we don't like to talk about, where the aggressor has not been the Negro man.

The Church has not condemned interracial marriage. In a sense, she too is not interested. She is concerned that couples know what they are going into, in any marriage, and that they enter the marriage freely. She is interested in holy and happy marriages.

Interracial marriage in itself is not a moral problem. I have known interracial marriages that give every evidence of coming as close to the Christian ideal as any that I have ever seen. Interracial injustice *is* a moral problem. An irrational fear about interracial marriage should not distract us from our goal or move us toward condoning injustice.

Interracial marriages will occur now and again as long as men and women are free to select their marriage partners. A society that penalizes such freedom of choice is an immoral society. Our task is to create a society where such marriages and all marriages are kept holy and enduring.

But the problem before us is not marriage, interracial or otherwise. The problem is seeking the Kingdom of God and His justice, and then all things else will take care of themselves in time.

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FROM SICILY

A Patchwork of Rags and Silks

EVERYBODY who has been to Naples, if only for a day, if only for an hour, knows that it is a fancy-dress figure of wealth-and-poverty: golden elegance to the front, a ragpicker behind. The same is true, though not so strikingly, of the counterpart of Naples in Sicily—its capital Palermo. It naturally would be equally true of Palermo since these are the only two cities in the whole 600-mile stretch south of Rome, and they both reflect the same hinterland, the same history. It would be a better image of wealth-and-poverty if the whole of the fancy-dress costume were a mingled patchwork of rags and silk; better still if it were a close-knit weave of golden threads and dirty threads. Because life in any southern town is a jumble of classes. Society is not arranged down here in a series of distinct layers.

Everything seems to our eyes to be on top of everything else. Ladies in furs and jewels will approach a desirable apartment in Naples through lanes fit to appear in a film as Cut-throat Gut in Singapore. A prince in Palermo may hold wassail on the first floor, or *piano nobile,* while a score of his fellow-citizens down to the cellars and up to the garrets are content with polenta and dry bread. What is the explanation for this medley? The deeper we thrust into the south the more evident the answer becomes, and by the time we have spent a couple of weeks in Sicily it becomes obvious: though then, perhaps, only because by then we have been driven in sheer puzzlement to read up a little of the history of Sicily, so rarely mentioned in our history-books. And without history Sicily is a Gioconda smile.

★

WE HAD landed in Palermo. The panorama is magnificant, infinitely more so than the Bay of Naples. The waterfront is picturesque, especially if the tunny-fleet is in. Then come the usual swarm of lanes and alleys; then the elegance, and much more of it than in Naples, much finer streets and shops, private houses, public buildings, public gardens, country villas. Palermo is a little Rome, as Marseilles is a little Paris. Then we begin to tour the island and we meet that grinding poverty of the peasantry which Elio Vittorini has evoked so unromantically, yet so feelingly in his novel, *In Sicily.* A mile up the hills from the comforts of Taormina you will come on villages that have not had a supply of drinking-water for centuries.

We go to the town of Noto for its rich concentration of baroque architecture—the richest and loveliest in all Italy, except perhaps for the town of Lecce in Apulia—but in the midst of our admiration at its beauty we cannot help being surprised at so much arrogant ostentation in the midst of so much hardship. The explanation is in one word — imperialism, ruthless, without conscience. Muslims, Normans, Angevins, Aragonese, Austrians, the Bourbons have all had their whack off Sicily.

Some of them, incidentally, as is the way of all imperialism, brought great gifts, preeminently the Arabs and the Normans. It was Arab artists and architects who gave the appearance of mosques to the churches of Palermo in the Norman epoch, such as San Giovanni degli Eremiti, or San Cataldo, with their red cupolas cutting the blue sky. In that dimly glittering gem of all southern architecture, the Cappella Palatina, you can see the Mohammedan motifs insinuated into the Christian decoration—the rosettes of the ceiling, the zig-zag incision of the pillars recalling oriental rose-gardens and palm-trees, the marble inlay of the floors offering an Arabic salute to the Christians' King. Islam is written all over the place-names of Palermo. That long street running up to the royal palace which the *popolane* knows as the Cassaro is the Arabic word *quasr,* meaning castle. But the great califates gave many words to Italian—and to English: *arsenale, maggazino, ammiraglio.*

That Norman epoch was Sicily's one and only experience of tolerant rule. It blended into one creative society Norman vivacity, Byzantine fastidiousness, Arab geniality and the sound sense of the Latins. Then came some 700 years of a much less intelligent foreign rule by the French and Spanish. It was of the four centuries of Spanish rule that people said that the Spanish nibbled at Sicily, ate Naples and devoured Milan. None of these periods was, of course, entirely barren. A welcome French lightness and grace still hangs about many corners of Palermo. But I do not think that any of them left many gay memories among the common people. One of the gayest things in Sicily is the brilliantly carved and painted country carts. They often depict scenes from the Sicilian Vespers, that bloody massacre of Frenchmen still remembered by the common people from the year 1282. On the other hand I frequently saw an old man in the public gardens of Palermo telling a circle of squatting children stories about Charlemagne's knights: a far older, affectionate hark-back to the Norman epoch.

★

THE CARDINAL result of these prolonged foreign dominations is that Sicily, and the whole south, developed only one permanently powerful social institution: the most putrefied upper-class has always played ball with power for the sake of its chances. But Sicily, and the Sicilians, as a whole, never got a chance.

I mentioned the extravagance of upper-class ostentation in Sicily. I read somewhere a neat story about that. A visitor staying in a palazzo noticed that a servant often passed in and out carrying a pair of carriage-doors. He discovered that the noble family downstairs shared a carriage with another noble family; but each had its own private carriage doors in order to display its own

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coat-of-arms. That is the sort of touch with which Balzac would have hit off the broken-down aristocrats of the Second Empire. We remember Pére Goriot, the revolutionary flour-merchant, and how after the fall of Napoleon, his daughters married into the Bourbon upper classes and ruthlessly squandered their father's last penny as well as their own.

This same ruthlessness in Sicily produces a bewildering effect on our sense of time. To us time means a pattern, a pattern of history, of some sort of organic growth. But where life is a gamble, and has for so long been a gamble, the present becomes a disturbing jumble. No country can enjoy a solid present if its past is not decently embalmed. It is a restful thing to visit Hampton Court, but it might not be so restful if Elizabeth and her gallant cut-throats were to get up on their hind legs and start roving the Spanish Main again. It is not so much that you never know where you are in Sicily as that you never know when you are. What period are people living through in an island where the Mafia still flourishes as it does?

I was talking one day to the most mousey-looking old professor beside the ruins of a Greek temple in Agrigentum; he told me how, about a year ago, two flashy gentlemen came to him, and one of them, affectionately rubbing his sleeve, said: "Uncle Matteo has sent us to you. He likes you and he wouldn't like anything to happen to you. So he knows that when Signor A. comes before you for his bank-examination you'll be kind to him." After that, whenever I was dealing with a solid-looking gentleman in a bank who would normally have impressed me by his probity, it was a little disturbing to think that he might be practicing business methods more suited to the days of the Carbonari, when Metternich, contemptuous of the hopes as well as the anarchy of Italy, said that it was not a country, but a geographical expression.

I suppose the fact is that there is not much room for sentimentality or morality, in a country which too many people with a little bit of capital have treated so long as a sort of Monte Carlo. When I went to see the Lake of Pergusa, in the very center of Sicily, below Enna—that lake where "Proserpine, gathering flowers, herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis was gathered," as Milton has said it, I found that the local business-men were putting a speed-track for motor cars all around the lake!

★

BUT there is no sense in romanticizing the poor either. As I was returning that same evening to Enna, and, having recovered from cursing the local gamblers, saw the first lights of the town, up on its great rock among the autumn clouds. I was trying to imagine what it was like when the Saracens sacked it and took off its women to Baghdad—when the driver pulled up with a jerk. There on the road was a poor woman, no more than a few degrees poorer than my driver, with a little boy whose eye had been torn by a wild dog. She was begging us to give her little boy a lift into Enna to the doctor. The driver's reaction was the conditioned reflex of a thousand years of hardship and insecurity. He flew into a rage and shouted heartlessly at her: "But who will pay me?"

That sort of experience would be bad enough if it happened in some tough, modern country, like America. But where a foreigner has been submitting his mind to the whole impact of whole time, as a foreigner will in an old and richly endowed country like this, he begins to feel that all their yesterdays have no certain promise, and that the only unit of time that means anything here is the passing day, perhaps only the passing hour—as in Monte Carlo.

★

I RECALL the evening I was coming back from the Wine Fair at Marsala. The bus was full of young men and women from Palermo whose acquaintance I had made during the day. They were gulping down the sticky stuff they had bought at the fair, singing away, careless of the night or the morrow. But my head was a medley of impressions: the day's fair, and the place where Garibaldi landed, and the ancient cult of Venus on the tip of Mount Eryx, now darkening against the sky, and the islands of the Aegades where the last naval battle of the Punic War was fought, melting back into the sea, and that we would be passing the battlefields of Calatafimi which ended Bourbon rule in Sicily, but not the rule of the landed gentry, and that for two hundred square miles hereabouts their estates have now been marked down for expropriations, and I was wondering will it ever happen . . .

Well, perhaps the boys and girls on the bus have the true measure of time, and the wise traveler will also live only for the day—if he can forget the shaking tapestry about him. It is not easy. One is sitting in the lap of comfort in Taormina, or with some warm-hearted companion in Catania. Suddenly one looks up. There is Etna bearing its little white flower. The streets are paved with lava. So many hearts have broken here. So many hearts will, like Etna's, burn and break again.

MR. O'FAOLAIN is an Irish journalist and short-story writer. His most recent books are A Summer in Italy, and The Short Story.

Book Fund

CARE of 20 Broad St., New York 5, N. Y., reports that in the past year or so its Book Fund, in conjunction with UNESCO, has distributed abroad more than one million dollars worth of current American scientific and technical books. Most of these volumes went to libraries devastated by the war.

One recipient was the Catholic Apprentices' and Students' Home in Berlin-Siemensstadt, a Don Bosco institution. The boys in this home have written to say that they are using their 33 illustrated and simplified volumes on American history, geography and our way of life to learn English. Such gifts are made possible by donations of all amounts to CARE's Book Fund.

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Alone Together in a Closed Shop

IN THE past few weeks two friends have sent me a pair of documents that fire solemn broadsides at the specter of union monopoly. One is an article by Donald R. Richberg entitled "Free Men vs. The Closed Union Shop." The other is a recent statement by Cecil deMille, the movie producer, before a committee of the Ohio Senate that was then considering another "right to work" law.

Richberg's article appeared recently in a magazine called *The Freeman,* which is run by such erstwhile liberals as John Chamberlain and Suzanne LaFollette, among others. Richberg himself was an early vintage New Dealer, co-author of the Railway Labor Act, co-author and chairman of the old NRA before it was poisoned by a sick chicken in 1935. He quotes Brandeis and Frankfurter in an effort to appeal to liberals. The article has been made into a special reprint by *The Freeman* and is being pushed around with a certain amount of drum-rolling and trumpet-blaring as "a text-book on freedom."

All this being so, it was a shock to start reading the article and find a basic misstatement of fact in the second paragraph. Says Richberg, "In a 'closed shop' no one can become and remain employed unless he is *already* a union member. In a 'union shop' no one can *hold* a job unless he *becomes* a union member."

So far so good. Second paragraph: "In either case this is a 'union closed shop' because the door of continuous employment is open only to union members."

This is untrue. Under the Taft-Hartley Act the closed shop is illegal in interstate commerce; the union shop is permitted if a majority of the workers vote for it, and if the employer grants it. However, no union can force a man out of his job for any other reason than refusal to pay his dues. In other words, a man might be thrown out of the union, or might resign from it, but as long as he continues to pay dues he is safe in his job and the union cannot insist that the employer discharge him. In short, under the union shop as we know it "the door of continuous employment" is open to non-union members.

★

PROCEEDING then on a completely false assumption, Richberg goes on to make one misstatement after another, most of them variations on the theme that "under a union closed shop monopoly they [the workers] are like prisoners in a vast jail which they have built for themselves. Only by trying a desperate revolt can they set themselves free—and if the revolt fails they stand to lose their opportunity to earn a living."

This is a strange thing. Can it be that Donald R. Richberg, who is billed by *The Freeman* as "one of the country's most outstanding authorities on labor legislation," is not familiar with the terms of the Taft-Hartley Act? The only other conclusion is that he is deliberately setting out to deceive the American public, and this I find hard to believe. The moral seems to be that every "outstanding authority" must keep abreast of his trade or he is an outstanding authority no longer. Another moral seems to be that magazine editors should beware of outstanding authorities.

In any case "Free Men vs. The Closed Shop" is not worth a serious rebuttal.

★

CECIL B. DEMILLE is better informed. He is not an outstanding authority, just a movie producer. But he has something called the deMille Foundation which has apparently done some research on the subject. Unlike Richberg, deMille is not trying to get the union shop outlawed. Just the closed shop. He has had the deMille Foundation whip up a little thing called a model state "right-to-work" act. This applies the union-shop provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act to intra-state commerce, together with a few unnecessary strictures on the right to picket. Apparently 17 states have already passed such laws.

The right to work is not an absolute right, as deMille and Richberg would give you to believe. It is not the kind of right to which all other rights must yield. Our employers have made us well aware of this. They hire you, give you the right to work, but under certain conditions—the conditions which they themselves set. And the conditions which they set can be pretty unpleasant. Now the unions have come along and have imposed certain other conditions which they justify on the ground that they are necessary to maintain an organization that can modify the conditions set by the employer according to the dictates of justice and human decency.

Sometimes the unions do not succeed in their attempts to justify the conditions which they impose. In this column readers have seen how a small union of Bronx building superintendents, under a ruthless dictator, has been able to impose an outrageous tyranny on its members and, if they protest, throw them not only out of their jobs but out of their homes. Being in intra-state commerce in a state, New York, which does not have any kind of right-to-work law, they are dependent upon the expensive and venal protection of the courts, which failed them. Similar things have happened in other unions, though these abuses are not as common as Messrs. deMille and Fichberg would have us believe.

But they are numerous enough to make necessary, in this writer's opinion, both the prohibition of the closed shop and that provision of the Taft-Hartley Act, mentioned above, which prevents a union from throwing anyone off a job, even in a union shop, for anything less than failure to pay dues. We need such legislation in

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both the federal government and the states. As to the closed shop, however, there should be exceptions made for industries like building, stevedoring and the merchant marine, where employment is casual and short-lived. This is only one of the weaknesses of the Taft-Hartley Act, which in spite of a few reasonable provisions is so full of anti-labor gimmicks that it needs to be overhauled beyond recognition.

In addition to such public controls of union power we need another which has not yet been tried. That is, a law to make it possible for union members who are expelled from their unions to appeal to labor boards and, if upheld, be restored to full membership without cost and without delay.

★

I AM glad that Mr. deMille does not question the simple union shop. Anyone who has worked for a union knows that the union shop is necessary. Without it a union is always on the defensive, insecure, and its leaders must waste too much of their time belaboring the obvious, justifying the existence of the union to numbskulls. Sometimes it is good to have to justify what you are doing, but not every day, not before an endless succession of half-wits and rugged individualists.

And then too there is something about the free rider which infuriates the loyal union man. Consider these non-union workers, how they ride along on the union's back, enjoying all the wage raises, the shorter hours, the pensions, the security and good conditions that the union has won for them with its heart's blood. And what do they give in return for these benefits? Nothing, nothing at all but alibis and abuse and hypocritical mouthings about regimentation and the right to work. Let them resign from the union if they want, but make them pay dues, make them contribute some support to that which so obviously benefits them. If "no taxation without representation" is a sound principle, so also is "no representation without taxation."

Another part of the deMille model act, and similar state acts, which I cannot go along with is a provision that says: "No person shall hinder or prevent the pursuit of any lawful work or employment by another person either (a) by threats, intimidation, force, or coercion. . . ."

Not that I am in favor of threats, intimidation, etc. But I think that when men go on strike and set up a picket line and start yelling at the scabs, they may be as sweet and Christian as you please, but there is something in the situation which is going to spell "threats and intimidation" to an anti-labor judge. And we still have too many of those around. For what is clearly out of order there are, in any case, plenty of local statutes on the books.

But then the right to strike and the right to picket do not seem to be in the same class at all with the right to work, not with the likes of Messrs. deMille and Richberg and others who grow purple and sulphurous over the subject of "union monopoly." It is really interesting to see how all their eloquence and passion, and their reason as well, fails them when they begin to consider these rights.

But then what do I want? Must we have a society in which everyone is as concerned about the other man's rights as he is about his own? If I applied that standard to myself, life and the writing of this column would be difficult indeed. Let us hope then only for a reasonable appreciation of the fact that others have rights and that, to them, they may seem just as important, just as soul-shaking, as our rights seem to us.

ROMANTIC POSSIBILITIES

THE other evening a group of young women were discussing the problem of how to find a man. Not how to get a man, but how to find one.

"You might as well face it, darling," one more experienced young woman said to another, "the Church isn't going to be any help to you. They don't allow women in the Holy Name Society and they won't let any men in the Sodality. Now the labor movement, there's a real possibility. If you belong to a union, are active in it, attend the meetings, it's an excellent place to find a man."

To me this was a new slant on the union movement. I could wish that some of our more ponderous pontificators on the labor problem were aware of such romantic possibilities. It might do wonders in lightening up their style.

THE AFL DOES IT AGAIN

PERHAPS the AFL executive committee depressed you again last month, as it depressed me. If so, do not take it too seriously. It is true that the committee voted to break up the United Labor Policy Committee. And it is also true that the ULPC, nine months old, was the first full-scale example of top-level cooperation between the AFL, CIO and railroad brotherhoods. And it is further true that the ULPC was a success during its short life and appeared to be laying the ground work for full organic unity of American labor.

The break-up is still not too important. The important thing is that cooperation continues on a local level. It started long before the old men on the AFL executive committee compromised with their intelligence long enough to admit that it was possible. And it will continue long after they have broken with their intelligence and killed the ULPC.

And eventually the spirit below will work up to the top. For it is finally true that, as in so many aspects of life, the good things start small and work up from below until they permeate the whole loaf. And this kind of spirit can reach even into the executive committee of the AFL. Some day.

JOHN C. CORT.

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The Screen

Artistic Goose Pimples

IT'S a pleasure to be able to announce a film that will appeal to the highbrows for its artistry and to the middlebrows for its terrifying suspense. I'm not sure how the lowbrows will take to *"The Medium"* because most of this fine movie made from Gian-Carlo Menotti's opera is sung, and this singing, although exceptionally good, gives the unimportant speeches in the script an unusual emphasis that detracts from the reality of the story and makes the whole piece somewhat arty. However all brows who have a genuine interest in cinema will find that this movie answers most requirements. It was beautifully photographed in Rome by Enzo Serafin and excellently directed by Menotti himself, assisted by Alexander Hammid. I was greatly moved when I saw and heard the original stage production of "The Medium;" but now I find the film even more moving and powerful as its gripping story enfolds one in its magic.

The story itself is really quite simple: Madame Flora, a fake spiritualist and psychic reader, lives with her lovely daughter and a mute gypsy boy who work the tricks at her seances while she pretends to go into a trance; but at one of these weird seances there are several unscheduled disturbances—a hand clutches Madame Flora by the throat and an off-stage voice (her daughter's) makes some suggestions for which there is no factual background; Madame Flora is caught in a trap of her own making and is finally thrown into a panic of fear that results in tragedy. It isn't the plot that is so scary, but the way it is done with the semi-dark visuals accompanied by Menotti's haunting score that is perfectly suited to the theme of a charlatan unable to find her way out of the web she has spun with her own sins.

As Madame Flora, Marie Powers, who also played the role on the stage, gives an unforgettable performance; the obvious, blowsy appearance and powerful, beautiful voice fit her frightening portrayal of a wicked woman on the verge of collapse. Also effective are young Anna Maria Alberghetti, who plays and sings the role of the daughter with a fascinating mixture of charming innocence and pre-adult understanding of evil, and Leo Coleman, who dances and mimics the role of the dusky gypsy mute with extraordinary grace. In supporting roles as victims of Madame Flora's chicanery are Belva Kibler, Beverly Dame and Donald Morgan, all of whom succeed in giving one the creeps as they beg the spiritualist for another opportunity to speak to their departed loved ones.

Again and again as you watch and hear these peole in this handsomely made film you become aware of how successfully they are conveying emotions without explicitly defining what they are doing. "How does one forget what he doesn't know?" and Madame Flora's plaintive, "Why am I afraid of this nothingness"? are the keys to this unusual movie. The answers are only hinted at as the frightened woman tries to say her rosary. For an unusual treat in cinema, one that effectively combines visuals with sound track, "The Medium" is an experience not to be missed.

★

EVERY now and then the critic has to handle a movie that really stumps him. *"People Will Talk"* is such a film. Well directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, who also wrote its witty script, it is loaded with lines that win one laugh after the other. And in the leading role as the doctor who believes that the practice of medicine should be more intimately involved with the human beings it treats, Cary Grant gives a charmingly gracious performance that stands with his best. However the plot of this movie, stemming from the play "Dr. Praetorius" by Curt Goetz, falls to pieces when examined carefully and almost sinks to the level of third-rate soap-opera. When the much-loved hero-doctor lies to the unmarried student (Jeanne Crain) and tells her she is not going to have a baby (because she attempted suicide when she learned she was pregnant) and when this doctor marries the much-worried heroine a few scenes later, you begin to wonder for just what age level this script was written. Perhaps your first impatience with the plot will come with its naive implication that Cary Grant just discovered psychosomatic medicine.
manner in curing them.

Since "People Will Talk" was made by the man who directed "All About Eve" and "A Letter to Three Wives," one has a right to expect something out of the ordinary. Actually if you can shut your mind to all the weaknesses in the story, you'll find the new Mankiewicz opus quite entertaining. Grant handles the clever dialogue in an amusing manner; and he is expertly assisted by Walter Slezak as a fellow scientist whose sense of fun is as lively as Grant's. Finlay Currie, as Grant's valet and a man of mystery who adds further complications to the very involved plot, and Hume Cronyn, as a mean professor who wants to get Grant bounced out of this medical school, also turn in fine performances. Maybe "People Will Talk" was made for the hot weather trade who want to laugh without having to think. It serves them well.

★

FOR those who want their movies more active and conventional, there's *"Jim Thorpe—All American,"* which tells the story of the famous Indian from Oklahoma who became a great athlete. That Thorpe had a right to be bitter in his attitude toward whites is made quite clear by the film; but the script isn't too sure of itself in explaining some of the man's other attitudes, especially in dissipating his many advantages. Burt Lancaster gives a good, muscular performance in the title role, but he is handicapped by the script. Young folk may not mind. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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The Case for Ikon Art

By WALTER KERR

THE saccharine lithography and amateur plastering which deface most American Catholic churches in the guise of religious art have come in for their share of contempt. It is hard not to join the derisive chorus. There is, however, a sense in which the most esthetically revolting chromo which now confronts us is better suited to its purpose than the masterpiece with which we keep saying we are going to replace it. There is a case to be made for bad church art, if only in contrast to the particular kind of good art we imagine ourselves substituting for it.

In urging that bad art be replaced with good art—good art as it has been produced by the masters, art on the da Vinci level—we do, of course, have the precedent of all those European cathedrals, and it is understandable that we should take pride in having once been associated with glories of a Michelangelo or a Titian. It is understandable, too, that we should hope to associate our churches of the future with the best art of the future, though there may be an element of unconscious snobbery, of unsuitable estheticism, in this. What we long for is another marriage of perfect art with perfect prayer.

There is, however, a question as to whether such a marriage ever existed, or even can exist. The art which belongs in churches is of a peculiar kind. It has a double function: (a) to attract the mind to itself, and then (b) to release the mind to something else. As an aid to prayer, a painting of the Blessed Virgin must be sufficiently attractive to compel attention briefly; but it must not be so attractive as to bring the mind to rest in its own delights. It must, in itself, be somehow *un*satisfying, so that the unsatisfied mind will turn from it toward a more profoundly rewarding spiritual reality of which it has merely put us in mind. The painting guides us, but its principal function is to guide us gently *away* from itself.

★

THE fine arts, at their strictest and finest, behave quite differently. In addition to their power to absorb and to hold us, they seek to satisfy us within their own compositional boundaries. They aim at—and achieve, so far as that is possible in human work of any kind—an ordered perfection to which no further element need be added and from which no necessary element may be missing. They are complete in themselves, they have wholeness, fullness, integrity. And because of their completeness, because they inspire in us no sense that anything is lacking, they do not so much drive our minds to further seeking as bring them to contented rest. It is a characteristic—it is, in fact, a precise *end*—of the fine arts that they engender a kind of exhilarated peace, a delighted repose which ordinarily goes by the name of 'complacence' and which has little to do with the psychological preparation for prayer.

LAUGHTER AT 3 A.M.

"Last night for the first time in many years I shouted with laughter at 3 a.m. I took up **John C. H. Wu's BEYOND EAST AND WEST** at ten o'clock and the bells for the early Mass were ringing as I read the final page. During those seven hours I chuckled frequently, laughed aloud once, was moved to compassion and sympathy. But especially I marvelled.
"This is the first time in my life (so far as I can remember) I have read the night through. It is probably the last. No one will ever again write a book quite like **BEYOND EAST AND WEST.**
"In the first place, since it is an autobiography, it may be well to say that it is a good autobiography. . . . Prior to this work only those who have known Wu intimately and who have had at least some training in speculative science have ever appreciated the greatness of his mind. Any careful reader can now appreciate the depth and breadth of an intelligence which must be ranked among the best of our (or any) time."—Rev. John H. McDonald, S.M., in *Paradise of the Pacific.*

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"Only Justice Holmes or Ernest Bramah could review Dr. Wu properly. . . . **BEYOND EAST AND WEST** is an unbuttoned, gossipy *Imitation of Christ,* flavored with rice wine."—Charles Brady in *The Buffalo Evening News.*

by John C. H. Wu

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The cathedral is not really a comfortable housing-place for so-called 'master' work. The cathedral which does house such work will soon find itself turned into something of a tourist spot, an unofficial museum for art-lovers. That the suggestion is not far awry is attested by the status of some European cathedrals today, those which have got themselves into Baedeker by virtue of their Renaissance frescoes and which now must play host to two rather different congregations. Henry Adams' admiration for Chartres was genuine, but esthetic; it did not precisely lead him to prayer. It is easy enough, too, to imagine the penitent who has really come in to pray passing Michelangelo by without a backward glance.

Newman said all this—better—in *The Idea of a University,* but we seem to have forgotten his caution:

> These high ministers of the Beautiful [painting, sculpture, architecture, music] . . . are special attendants and handmaids of Religion; but . . . they are apt to forget their place, and, unless restrained with a firm hand, instead of being servants, will aim at becoming principals. Here lies the advantage, in an ecclesiastical point of view, of their more rudimental state, I mean of the ancient style of architecture, of Gothic sculpture and painting, and of what is called Gregorian music, that these inchoate sciences have so little innate vigor and life in them, that they are in no danger of going out of their place, and giving the law to Religion. But the case is very different when genius has breathed upon their natural elements, and has developed them into what I may call intellectual powers. When Painting, for example, grows into the fullness of its function as a simply imitative art, it at once ceases to be a dependent of the Church. It has an end of its own, and that of earth: Nature is its pattern, and the object it pursues is the beauty of Nature, even till it becomes an ideal beauty, but a natural beauty still. It cannot imitate that beauty of Angels and Saints which it has never seen. At first, indeed, by outlines and emblems it shadowed out the Invisible, and its want of skill became the instrument of reverence and modesty; but as time went on and it attained its full dimensions as an art, it rather subjected Religion to its own ends than ministered to the ends of Religion."

NEWMAN'S remarks, however, are in one way not very helpful. The artist who wishes to do something decent for his Church, and the ecclesiastic who wishes to commission him to do it, are both left at sea as to procedure. On the one hand, the work is not to be in execrable taste; on the other, it is not to be so well-developed in its natural powers as to exceed its function. Where is the artist to stop? Newman speaks well of the "want of skill" with which one brought about the right kind of church art. Is the artist to paralyze himself, to blunt his own powers deliberately, to engage in a kind of affected clumsiness? Newman looks back to a time when these things were in a "rudimental state," when there was "little innate vigor and life in them," and all that this suggests to the contemporary artist is that he go in for a kind of fake primitivism which is quite properly repellent to him. His root problem is one of definition: is there any precise form at which he is aiming, a form with rules of its own, and a form which may be handled by a sophisitcated artist of the twentieth century?

As a matter of fact there is, but we have allowed the term for it, and thus its helpfulness as a guide, to fall into disuse. The term is 'icon,' and the method of the icon is to combine in more or less equal parts two fundamentally opposed human tools: the symbol and the image. I say that these are fundamentally opposed because each, as it attains its own perfection, normally tends to exclude the other. The symbol, which is an abstract formula meant to stand for something absent, achieves purity in that mathematical equation or in that carefully defined word from which all trace of the concrete, the imagistic, the existential order of things has been removed; it attains perfection on an exclusively theoretical plane.

The symbol H_2O not only contains no water, it does not even *look* like water; the symbol 'c-a-t' is entirely devoid of any suggestion of whiskers. The image, which is a concrete representation meant to intensify the *presence* of something, achieves purity as it strips itself of all theoretical formulae, of all abstract substitutions for reality, and confines itself to the imitation of such things as do appear in the existential order.

Thus, a good painting not only requires no caption, or helpful explanatory words, it also studiously eliminates from its frame any actual symbolism; the task of the artist is to make everything dazzlingly *present,* he is not permitted to rough in lamely certain substitutions for what is absent. A halo on a Madonna is a confession by the artist that the Madonna's face does not contain an adequate spirituality—for what he has not been able to get into the face, he substitutes a conventional, theoretical sign. The Madonna which *requires* a halo to complete it is never an entirely satisfactory work of fine art, though, as we shall see, it may prove a satisfactory icon. In general, the perfected symbol is the tool of science, of ratiocinative activity; the perfected image is the tool of pleasure, of profound intellectual delight in being itself, viewed as simply and directly as possible.

★

THE icon, in combining these two somewhat antagonistic forms, does so deliberately, with a regard for its peculiar function. It makes the most of the fact that, since these two forms *are* antagonistic, neither can be brought to perfection, and it attempts to strike a poised, somewhat tense, balance between the two. The image is employed for its sensory and, up to a point, its emotional qualities: the eye is attracted and the emotions are given a prod in certain limited directions. Then, before the intellect can begin to take its satisfaction in a final and perfect ordering of the imagistic elements which have been presented to it, before the stimuli aroused can find fufilment in a kind of vision of natural perfection, the iconographer consciously abandons the technique with

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which he has begun. By shifting from what is attractively present to the broader suggestion of what is absent, he opens the door to prayer.

A lamb resting before a cross constitutes a familiar example of iconography. The lamb is recognizably a lamb, not an abstraction, and he catches and holds our eye in a way that the bare, unadorned cross-symbol cannot; he offers more to look at—for the moment. But we are not carried forward to deep enjoyment of the lamb as a lamb, the iconographer does not seek the perfection of the form *lamb* in the natural order. By roughing in the familiar shape and providing it with an attractive line, he draws upon its sensory and emotional powers.

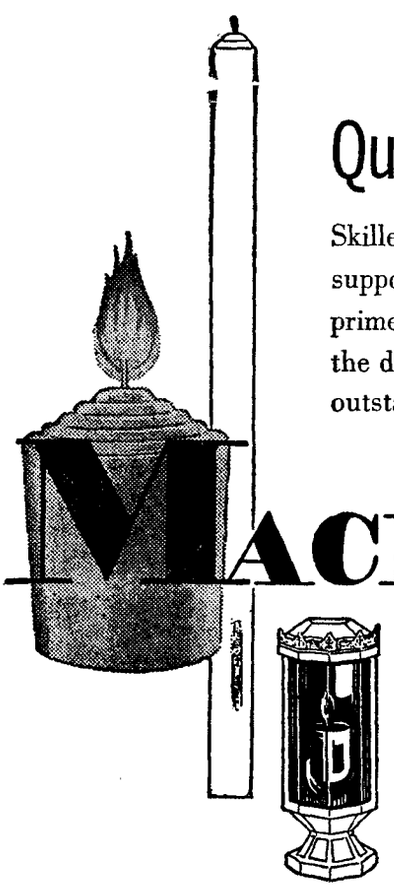
What he does not do, as Newman would have it, is grant it its 'intellectual powers,' its capacity for delighting the mind with an ultimate, interior order. Instead, once the senses and emotions are captive, he leads the eye (and the mind) along a carefully designed line to the more abstract cross, to a reminder of what is absent in the material order, to a reminder of what is unsatisfying in the material order, to the other-meaning of the form *cross*. A crucifix, by the way, does not always do as well; it may be given too much imagistic power and so move toward art as art. The spare letters, IHS, would not do as well for the opposite reason: they ask an immediate exertion of the intellect without any assistance from the lower sensory and emotional powers.

The artist who would turn iconographer, then, must reverse his normal method; but this, so long as it is a conscious procedure, is perfectly possible to him, and on quite a sophisticated level. It would be ridiculous to attempt a mathematical formula for the proportion of image to symbol in the ideal icon. One thing can be said, however: whenever there is an unsettled balance between them, whenever the iconographer feels himself inclined to favor one or the other, he must always decide in favor of the symbol. The icon as a form is *essentially* symbolic, only incidentally imagistic.

★

THE icon is that species of craftsmanship most suited to provoking prayer. Because we have lost sight of it as a defined form, and vaguely identified it with the fine arts proper, a great deal of confusion has ensued, and some time and energy has been wasted. Eric Gill, for instance, was by instinct an iconographer, but he was determined that there should be no distinction made between iconography and fine art. In his *Letters* (p. 86) he refuses to admit a difference between the picture of a thing and the abstract name for a thing. This, I think, is why practising artists have so much difficulty over Gill's theory and, for that matter, over his work, which was in large part iconographic.

When Jean Charlot finds Gill's work 'bloodless' he is using an adjective which would not be damaging, which would in fact be quite suitable, to an icon; but Gill would not have it that way, he would have it that the icon and the fully realized work of fine art were



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one and the same thing, and this kind of insistence, which is by no means peculiar to the followers of Gill, has led to useless conflict, excessive theorizing, and, I think, considerable delay in getting anything very practical done about the present state of church art.

Granting the icon as a distinct and practicable form, certain real things can be done: (a) the imagistic qualities in church art, *so far as they go,* can be simplified and improved esthetically without fear of their outrunning their boundaries, a fear which has helped keep things at a stalemate; and (b) the tendency toward 'pure' imagery can be reasonably discouraged. Actually, much of what clutters our churches today—the average statue of St. Anthony, for instance—is pure imagery badly executed. That is to say, it is wrong on both counts: intention and execution, a mere sensual and sentimental rendering in the natural order. The esthete dislikes it because it is sentimental; the conscientious churchman dislikes it because its appeals, such as they are, are not precisely spiritual. The iconographer who understands his task is in a position to bring these two together.

In the meantime, we are badly off; it is still possible, however, that we are not so badly off as that Renaissance cathedral which is listed in the guidebooks for reasons having little to do with its function as a house of prayer. Our bad art may be bad indeed; but it surely succeeds in at least one of the icon's functions—that of guiding the eye firmly away from it.

Communications

Attack on Maritain

New York, N. Y.

TO THE Editors: In a predicament, not personal but affecting the integrity of Catholic intellectual life in this country, I turn to you.

The August issue of *Integrity* carried a review by Aurel Kolnai of Jacques Maritain's *Man and the State,* a review so outrageous that I felt obliged to speak against it. The editors of *Integrity,* however, declined to publish my protest, at the same time assuring me that they agreed with the reviewer. But Mr. Kolnai's review was so impertinent, not to say arrogant, that it must not remain unchallenged.

Not that Maritain needs my defense, nor that I expected Mr. Kolnai to accept Maritain's political philosophy. Back in the thirties, when Hitler was at the gates of Vienna, Mr. Kolnai's idol was the assassinated Dictator—King Alexander of Yugoslavia My quarrel is not with Mr. Kolnai's disagreement with Maritain's book, but with the way in which he voices it.

He writes not as one philosopher differing with another, let alone as a Christian differing with a Christian, but as a self-appointed inquisitor—or should I rather say, as an over-bright schoolboy who has yet to learn his manners. Even a few of his phrases about Maritain: "He can only speak (of the French Revolution) in the tones of a French republican banquet orator," "He strikes the reader as if he were anxious to appear eligible for Catholic as well as for democratic-progressive-pinkish drawing-rooms," his book is "loath to renounce any fine and fashionable mood," his ideological constructions "dress up poor Thomas Aquinas in the rags of a laicist apostle of democracy," and the volume has "hardly ever a passage that would suggest the thinker in quest of truth"—even these few phrases, quite apart from their preposterousness, are enough to show him devoid of elementary decency.

Mr. Kolnai is also very skillful in slander by insinuation, a technique unworthy of a philosopher, worthy of a yellow journalist or an abusive politician. Declaring that "Maritain professes a progressive philosophy of history in the vein of the Enlightenment, Hegel and Marx," he implies that with the Enlightenment and Marx, Maritain holds that man is sufficient unto himself and that his mind is mighty enough to solve all his problems. And this though Maritain preached the contrary long before Mr. Kolnai was heard of.

Again, he couples Maritain with Lamennais and with Sangnier's *Sillon* movement, which were condemned by the Church, thus suggesting that his views too are condemnable. Indeed, he declares of his political philosophy that "in the upshot . . . it is Anti-Christ begged to accord an asylum to Christ." One of the few concrete objections in Mr. Kolnai's six-page morass of generalities is to Maritain's approval (qualified though it be) of World Government. How it must grieve Mr. Kolnai that Pius XII has congratulated the World Federalists on the courage with which they spend themselves for their cause, on their readiness to leave the beaten path.

They are few who know Maritain and are not struck by his graciousness, by his wisdom which is all charity, by his love of men with its source in his love of Christ. And even those who have never met him know that his work—and he has labored, literally, while others slept—has done much to lead Catholic philosophy out of its ghetto, that his thought and his personality have brought countless people into the Church. When Mr. Kolnai called this harvest "worldly success," what could have guided his pen if not *ressentiment?*

In his last paragraph, Mr. Kolnai chides Maritain for his "serious lack of self-criticism" in letting his book be published in "unusually bad English." Admittedly, it is not faultless, but it is simple and true. Yes, Maritain's English is the English of a Frenchman, but the lack of self-criticism is all on the part of Mr. Kolnai, who does not see that his own style is pompous and overladen. As a priest, may I dare suggest to Mr. Kolnai, and, for that matter, to the editors of *Integrity,* that they make a retreat one of these days, and ask their retreat master to stress the two basic Christian virtues: humility and charity.

(*Rev.*) JOHN M. OESTERREICHER.

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Books

Prize Stories of 1951. *The O. Henry Awards. Selected and edited by Herschel Brickell. Doubleday.* $3.75.

A SURPRISINGLY large number of excellent short story collections have been published in the last year or so; perhaps it is partly by contrast that the 1951 O. Henry group seems so poor.

The most objectionable thing in the book, however, is the introduction, which, in 19 pages, presents Mr. Brickell being cute with the comments of the three judges, with the stories of his collection, with the short story situation and, naturally, with art and life and all that. There is an archness about the introduction that is most prejudicial to the stories themselves.

After all, any story trying to do something more than amuse for a moment is subject, unless its author has much greater control over his medium than have most of the people here represented, to two interpretations: the valid, incisive view of whatever the story is about, and the strictly phony, forced effort at a faked significance. This is perhaps especially true of the symbolic story and of the now-I-see type in which the main character learns something profound in the last three hundred words. This book is loaded heavily with these kinds, and, after the archness, one is by no means prepared to trust Mr. Brickell's judgment.

One fault common to maybe half of the two dozen stories is a lack of fusion between material and meaning. One feels, in any individual case, that the statement the story wishes to make is probably true, and that the material used could indeed be used to make the statement; but the two aren't closely enough related. For the author, and certainly for the reader, they are two separate things.

John Hersey's "Peggety's Parcel of Shortcomings" is a fair example of this particular shortcoming in Mr. Brickell's parcel. Peggety is a fat cook who accepts life, her shortcomings, everything, in the body of a dead fish she finds herself burdened with on a date in the city. And she does so in just about those words while Mr. Hersey is being folksy as all get-out with the dialogue of a Scotch cook.

Folksiness is another note that lends the collection unity. Apparently there is a back-to-the-farm movement among short-story writers, or at least among those Mr. Brickell admires. A definite bloc here is concerned with country living as something important in itself, just as, in the old days, people used to get ga-ga in print about the scarlet woman, Manhattan Island. Possibly the worst story in the book is Evan S. Connell, Jr.'s "I Came From Yonder Mountain," which manages to combine folksiness, the Burl Ives touch, with a tremendous sense of fake significance.

There are about five good stories in the group. William Faulkner's "A Name for the City" is one of the most amusing pieces this reader has come across in months. Jean Stafford's "A Country Love Story" is weird and beautiful. The best in the lot is Oliver La Farge's "Old Century's River," in which an old American in exile dies happily in the jungle, quite drunk, without being folksy about his exotic surroundings and without learning a thing.

FRANK GETLEIN.

The Struggle for the Mediterranean 1939-1945. *Raymond de Belot. Princeton University Press.* $4.

WE are growing tired of the average personal narrative from war correspondents and participants who looked at great events from their own petty frog perspectives. At a time when readers no longer regard previous wars with melodramatic sentiments but with the frightful vision of a Third World War, research into basic problems of past strategy has more than entertainment value. The author of this book, a French rear admiral of superior experience and clear-cut thought, gives not only the story but also a critical evaluation of the fight for control of the Mediterranean Sea and the meaning of the struggle in the framework of power politics.

Twice the Axis had been at the point of driving Great Britain from Suez. In the critical summer weeks of 1941 and 1942 only the transfer of great Luftwaffe contingents to the Russian theatre saved the British. By conquering Suez, Grand Admiral Raeder claimed, the European Axis "would have been able to reach the Indian Ocean and join forces with Japan." This might have been an exaggeration but certainly the loss of the strategic Canal would have been a very serious blow to the Allies. The defeat of the Axis armies in North Africa was, according to this author, caused not so much by Axis inferiority at sea as in the air.

The victory was not achieved by a great naval battle; the efforts of the naval forces proved to be more fruitful in attacks against the shore, which paved the way for the invasion of Europe, than in actions on the open sea.

While the Axis underestimated the strategic importance of the Mediterranean defense, the British were always convinced of its fundamental importance and made many sacrifices for it. But they were really successful only after the arrival of U. S. Navy and air assistance in the Mediterranean. In spite of this cooperation, differing views between the two sea powers remained, and on some very important questions.

With great perseverance Great Britain attempted to draw the Allied Armies toward the Balkans. This reviewer is sincerely convinced that such a strategic action would have limited the subsequent westward expansion of Communism and saved

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the Danube basin from bolshevization. Raymond de Belot, however, is very cautious and avoids any remarks that might antagonize American military leadership. He only hints carefully; the invasion of Italy, he writes, "conformed neither to the hopes . . . nor to the abundance of the sacrifices made." A careful study of the author's analysis of the events themselves however may open the reader's eyes to several serious strategical mistakes.

Critical reflections such as these are not without practical value. The Mediterranean may play a still more important role in war strategy. Nowhere does the free world lean so far eastward as it does along the shores of the Mediterranean. Jugoslavia, Greece and Turkey are integral parts of our world front; the Iron Curtain comes down just north of their frontiers. A Mediterranean controlled by the Navy and Air Forces of free men is the safest bulwark against the Kremlin's desire for further advance on the West.

MAX FISCHER.

Dance of Death. Jean Charlot. Sheed & Ward. $2.50.

IF it happens that satirical cartoons are pressed into service today as a form of Catholic expression, their instrumental worth is not to be doubted merely because Saint Jerome never had recourse to them. No one could imagine Francis of Assisi drawing pictures of fat Pharisees and skinny Publicans, while chortling over a subtle and pointed caption. Yet, no one could imagine Francis of Assisi busy writing a sermon while seated in a passenger plane hovering over foggy Chicago.

On the other hand, it is right to be skeptical of any new Christian manifestation which cannot be related to a traditional Christian custom. For example, Cardinal Pacelli, who *did* write sermons while hovering over Chicago in a plane, was, while doing so, complying with the ancient custom of formulating sermons while en route between cities. Paul did this, and so did Dominic.

Now, the moral satirical cartoon is the revival of an old religious custom which fell into disuse. This custom pre-dated the precept that every good man should mind his own business and let predestination take its course. The custom is called fraternal correction. I don't know just how fraternal correction was handled among the brethren in Saint Jerome's time, but I have some information on how it is done in Trappist monasteries today in such places as Massachusetts, Kentucky, and Utah. Since Trappists don't talk as a matter of policy, and since they are under strict obedience to their superiors, they can't tell a brother Trappist off whenever they catch him breaking the rule, but they save it for what is called a Chapter of Faults. Here they accuse one another of any improper conduct observed during the interim since the last chapter, in the presence of the top brass. Motives are not imputed, nor is there mention of sins. Behavior is the sole concern and only in reference to the rule of life, to which they have all subscribed.

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Fraternal correction, once practiced by all Christians and still regarded by the Church as a spiritual work of mercy, would take a different form among laymen than among Trappists. In every case, however, it is based upon the reasonable assumption that charity obliges a man to have some concern about the unseemly conduct of his neighbor. It runs counter to the current convention that if a man chooses to beat his wife, be an infernal bore, or commit suicide, it is strictly a matter between him and (his) God, or, at least, between him, his wife, and the police. According to this convention it is considered proper to guide a man along the route to New York or Boston, but discourteous to set him straight on the likely routes to heaven.

The adjective 'fraternal' has an interesting connotation. Brother cannot censor brother, because censorship lies with the authority beyond brotherhood. Fraternal correction is a voice from the elbow, not from upstairs. If it has a bite, it is not the bite of damnation or judgment. It is the pinch of a brother who himself would expect a pinch under similar circumstances.

In the absence of this custom, the satirical cartoon fills the breach. If it were the custom to face one another without too much embarrassment and say, "Listen Johnny, you talk too much," or "Say Bill, Christ was a worker, so why don't you try it for a change?" or, "Jim, why don't you stop griping and start praying?" then fraternal correction would be operating in high gear. The cartoonist draws a cap. You can wear it if it fits.

Above and beyond this, Christian satire, whether graphic or literary, performs the function of inducing greater *corporate* self-knowledge. This has special benefits in an age when social justice and social charity are more lacking than simpler forms of the same virtues. It isn't wholly fair, nor is it of much advantage, for example, to remind an individual doctor of what is wrong with the medical profession, nor to point out to one business man all the faults of the capitalistic system. There is probably little they as individuals can do to improve the situation. It is quite fair, and it may be efficacious to make many doctors and many business men aware of a corporate shortcoming, since together they may be able to do something about it. The published work can accomplish this kind of fraternal correction much better than inter-personal conversations, because it induces not only a personal but a social awareness of the evil.

Again, considering the prevailing spirit of equalitarianism which has little respect for authority, it is good that the hotfoot is administered by a lowly cartoonist.

These are thoughts in appreciation of Jean Charlot's new book of cartoons. It is a collection of drawings and captions about Death and the manner in which it visits various people. To the nudist, for example, Death remarks, "Come just as you are." To the optimist he exclaims, "You dared me!" To the pessimist he scolds, "You talked me into it." There are fifty cartoons in all.

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The Wisdom of Father Pecquet. By Omer Englebert. David McKay Co. $3.

IT is many years now since I read Georges Bernanos' *Diary of a Country Priest.* My principal memory of the book is that I found it a very depressing tale. It is a well woven story, unquestionably, and a fine piece of writing; but it was with a very atypical priest that Bernanos occupied himself. He exposed the Cross with an unrelieved nakedness that seldom is found in real life—else there would be little truth in Christ's promise that "My yoke is sweet and My burden light."

In *The Wisdom of Father Pecquet,* Father Omer Englebert has cast his country curé in a mold which is almost the direct opposite of that used by Bernanos. Father Pecquet is such a priest as all of us, whether French or American, would be happy to have as our pastor. He loves his hard-working peasant flock, and is loved by them in turn. Along with a sense of humor and a gift for epigram, he has the even more important skill of making eternal truths understandable to his literal-minded parishioners. He is a familiar visitor in the homes of all his people, including the free-thinking stationmaster. He rides his bicycle, tends his bees, and dispenses advice in which theology and common sense are nicely blended with a twinkle. Aware of his own limitations, his ambitions are in reverse; and he seems to have been completely neglected by the devils which so tormented the priests in Bernanos' books. Perhaps he is a bit on the over-optimistic side, as when he decides that, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice," has not much practical significance in his parish. But his own sense of justice is strong, and his greatest temptation is to impatience with the rich and the pretentious. On the whole, most of us would be willing to settle for Father Pecquet as our spiritual mentor.

Actually *The Wisdom of Father Pecquet* is not a story at all. It purports to be a random and an abridged collection of the various manuscripts which clutter his rectory: journals, letters, sermons and notes; such of them at least as have escaped being used to start fires or to stuff Father Pecquet's over-large shoes. Perhaps the cheerful tone of the collection which Father Pecquet's supposed nephew has made, is accounted for by the fact that the old man kept two separate journals, one for his Dark Days and one for his Good Days.

The Wisdom of Father Pecquet—which, incidentally, Katherine Woods has translated from the original French—provides 217 pages of entertaining reading for the casual-minded, and a good bit of meditative reading for the thoughtful-minded. It provides, too, more than a little expert infighting on contemporay problems.

Only a gambler would hazard a guess as to the lasting worth of Father Englebert's book. It's smile-salted sanity may be dismissed lightly by a generation which tends to enshrine allegorical profundities and tortured abstractions. I would say that if Picasso outlives Whistler, then certainly *The Diary of a Country Priest* will outlive *The Wisdom of Father Pecquet.* But I am sure that Father Pecquet would be the last to care.

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